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Dear Friends:

The current session is a short one, but the issues decided will have a lasting effect upon you and your family. That's why it is important that you know where I stand on some of the most crucial decisions legislators will face this year.

I will continue fighting for traditional American values and ideals which I believe promise the best future for ourselves, our families and our country. Families are the essential building blocks of our society. That is why I continue to take firm stands on issues that protect them. This year, many other legislators have joined me in this battle, and working together, we will make our collective voices heard more strongly than ever before.

Communicating with you is very important to me. Since this is an election year, we are limited by law to only two newsletters or group mailings, of which this is the first. So please remember that you can also contact me and other legislators to learn what's happening here in Olympia.

Sincerely,

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION TAX CUT

We have made progress in improving state government the past two years, and I intend to keep pushing for the kind of changes you want – lower taxes, more local control and less government interference in our lives. As you know, I support substantial, fair and permanent tax cuts. I am also working on ways to channel more money into school construction without raising taxes so we can keep pace with the increasing school-age population.

The 1997 Legislature fully funded the state's projected obligation for state matching funds for school construction through the 1997-99 bien-nium. But schools still have a tough job coming up with their part of the match, which is typically raised through the sale of bonds supported by increased local property taxes.

To help ease the construction-cost crunch on schools and lessen the impact on local property taxes, I'm sponsoring legislation to remove part of the tax burden on school districts. The measure is straightforward, fair and easy to administer. It would remove the sales tax on the labor and services portion of contracted K-12 public school construction. I am not asking that schools be exempted from local sales taxes, but only from the state sales tax on labor and services, which amounts to about 6.5 percent of all contracted construction except materials.

This change would have minimal impact on our state budget, but it would be a sizeable boost for school construction just when we need it most. How much would be generated by this proposal? It would save our school districts more than \$7 million annually — with the resulting savings to taxpayers and lowered bond costs for the district.

Special Legislative Report

39th District

State Representative
JOHN KOSTER

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HERE ARE MY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 1998 SESSION.



Seek legislation making changes needed to keep convicted offenders from threatening the safety and security of our families, homes and communities.

The problems that led to an inmate's escape from the Larchway Lodge Group Home and subsequent murder of a babysitter in Stanwood last September should not and will not be forgotten. I am working to implement policies that demand tougher standards for group homes, juvenile detention facilities, and halfway houses.



Require the teaching of phonics in grades K-3. Recent testing scores of fourth-graders statewide showed an unmistakable pattern. Those who were taught phonics, irrespective of socio-economic factors, scored remarkably higher in reading and math.



Provide infrastructure financing. We must be efficient and be using taxpayers' money efficiently before we even consider asking them for more.



Continue to explore and encourage private funding alternatives for public projects to bring the proven benefits of competition to bear in reducing the cost of government.



Protect the integrity of state spending limits imposed by Initiative 601. Any act by the governor or the Legislature to circumvent the intent of I-601 is tempting legal appeals and an uprising of those who worked so hard to get it passed.



Resist efforts to abridge individual rights, including moves to require unreasonable restrictions on firearm use and ownership. The voters of this state showed their strong support of Second Amendment rights when they rejected Initiative 676 by an overwhelming 71 percent last fall.



Support I-200 — the Washington Civil Rights Initiative — which would prohibit government “from discriminating or granting preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin in public employment, education and contracting.”



Support a ban on so-called “same-sex marriages.” With the Hawaii Supreme Court poised to legalize same-sex “marriages” — possibly within the next few weeks, it is more urgent than ever that our state establish a strong public policy supporting traditional marriage or be forced by judicial decree to recognize “marriages” of same-sex couples performed elsewhere.

Come visit us!

*Each year, thousands of people, including many school children, visit their district legislators in Olympia. This year, John will be co-hosting an open house with Sen. Val Stevens following the “**March for Life**” demonstration on **Jan. 26** as well as a **Town Hall meeting Feb. 21**. For details on these and other special events, or if you and your group would like to arrange to visit anytime during the session, contact Donna in Rep. Koster's office at (360) 786-7816.*

